

DATE: February 20, 1973
Tuesday

TO : File

FROM : Joshua Lederberg

SUBJECT:

Last Friday Tom and Ed and I had more or less definitely concluded that we ought to narrow the focus of our further effort at SUMEX to concentrate on biochemical applications. This was on the basis of some discouragement whether we would ever be able to justify the more comprehensive PDP-10 based program. However, King and Baker were out here today and Baker is very keen to see us persevere and he gave us a much more optimistic picture of how the study section viewed our application than we had gotten before. He thinks we should go for broke in trying to organize some reasonably effective national resource in the field of artificial intelligence applied to medicine. And we just might make it. We were negotiating on the basis of being able to use about 50% of such a resource under local control and about 50% for distribution to other people around the country. The users would be further classified in terms of collaborators who will get some further support besides computing time and those who newly come on to the service. There was not very much that we could do but accept this offer as it is coupled with implied support expressed very strongly to find some way to maintain the continuity of our research efforts of the order of \$180,000 to \$200,000 a year as a supplement to our DENDRAL project in the event that the larger framework is not at this time accepted. There is some tension as to whether to pull the study section to a cliff and demand that they jump, on some all and on basis, as opposed to giving them a range of options which they are very likely to take only fractionally. The usual problem of linkage in negotiation!

There just seem to be some real understanding of the problems of negotiating as complicated a system as this and of the importance of having some very close-in discussion about the style with which it will eventually be managed.

I promised Baker that I would have a memorandum for him on the long-range implications of GCMS technology for health purposes which he might use for program justification purposes. In addition, we have to provide a range of pegs which are not too visible but which can be pointed out at option in a course of the study section's deliberations that give them the possibility of segmented approval of our request but do not push them into it.

I mentioned the case of ethanolamine accumulation and the implication to that this has that at autopsy it may be necessary to freeze tissues for later biochemical purification. We have a tricky problem that there are a number of qualified AI oriented users at Stanford but we probably have to leave it to the advisory committee to select which ones will be able to qualify. On the other hand, we have to encourage a number of others outside to submit independent applications. We had too much of a real time emphasis for the local community before and obviously this is not the kind of thing that can be offered over the wire.